



BUILDING-STRUCTURE INVENTORY FORM

NYS OFFICE OF PARKS, RECREATION
& HISTORIC PRESERVATION
DIVISION FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION
(518) 474-0479

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

UNIQUE SITE NO. _____
QUAD _____
SERIES _____
NEG. NO. _____

YOUR NAME: Cynthia Howk DATE: Dec., 1994

133 S. Fitzhugh St.
YOUR ADDRESS: Rochester, NY 14608 TELEPHONE: 546-7029

ORGANIZATION (if any): The Landmark Society of Western New York, Inc.

IDENTIFICATION

St. Charles Borromeo Community Center

1. BUILDING NAME(S): (original St. Charles Borromeo Church)
2. COUNTY: Monroe TOWN/CITY: Greece VILLAGE: ---
3. STREET LOCATION: 3003 Dewey Avenue (N.W. corner of Maiden Lane)
4. OWNERSHIP: a. public ☐ b. private ☒ Church
5. PRESENT OWNER: St. Charles Borromeo ADDRESS: (same) Rochester, NY 14616
6. USE: Original: church Present: community center/gymnasium
7. ACCESSIBILITY TO PUBLIC: Exterior visible from public road: Yes ☒ No ☐
Interior accessible: Explain limited access

DESCRIPTION

8. BUILDING MATERIAL: a. clapboard ☐ b. stone ☐ c. brick ☐ d. board and batten ☐
e. cobblestone ☐ f. shingles ☐ g. stucco ☒ other: over concrete block
Foundation not visible. Asphalt shingle roof; tower has ceramic tile roof.
9. STRUCTURAL SYSTEM: a. wood frame with interlocking joints ☐
b. wood frame with light members ☐ c. masonry load bearing walls ☒
d. metal (explain) _____
e. other _____
10. CONDITION: a. excellent ☒ b. good ☐ c. fair ☐ d. deteriorated ☐
11. INTEGRITY: a. original site ☒ b. moved ☐ if so, when? _____
c. list major alterations and dates (if known): _____

(see continuation sheet)

12. PHOTO:

13. MAP:

"This is quite nice. The architectural details are all on the front: the tower is nice. It has a certain kind of charm to it, as relates to the small and intimate. Given the rarity of distinctive historic churches in the town, I would put this in the 'green plus' category." P.Malo

COLOR CODE

Green plus



14. THREATS TO BUILDING: a. none known ☒ b. zoning ☐ c. roads ☐
d. developers ☐ e. deterioration ☐
f. other: adjacent to commercial development on busy road.
15. RELATED OUTBUILDINGS AND PROPERTY:
a. barn ☐ b. carriage house ☐ c. garage ☐
d. privy ☐ e. shed ☐ f. greenhouse ☐
g. shop ☐ h. gardens ☐
i. landscape features: part of St. Charles Borromeo campus
j. other: attached school wings, convent, church, portable
16. SURROUNDINGS OF THE BUILDING (check more than one if necessary): school, rectory, large parking lot.
a. open land ☐ b. woodland ☐
c. scattered buildings ☐
d. densely built-up ☒ e. commercial ☒
f. industrial ☐ g. residential ☒
h. other: Bethany Presbyterian Church campus on opposite (east) side of Dewey Ave.
17. INTERRELATIONSHIP OF BUILDING AND SURROUNDINGS:
(Indicate if building or structure is in an historic district)

(see continuation sheet)

18. OTHER NOTABLE FEATURES OF BUILDING AND SITE (including interior features if known):

(see continuation sheet)

SIGNIFICANCE

19. DATE OF INITIAL CONSTRUCTION: 1926 (cornerstone)
- ARCHITECT: Frank Quinlan
- BUILDER: Iuppa and Maggio, Rochester, NY.

20. HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL IMPORTANCE:

(see continuation sheet)

21. SOURCES: (see continuation sheet)

22. THEME: religious.

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11c.

Round rose window (front gable) and small parapet tower with bell (front gable) have been removed (visible in 1938 photo).

Square tower, arched triple window (facade) and one-story, shed-roofed vestibule (facade) are additions (c. 1940s?).

The long, narrow windows (set in pairs) on the north and south elevations were added (c. 1940s?); they replaced the original large, multi-paned square windows (seen in 1938 photo).

Three large metal ventilation units (on roof ridgeline in 1938 photo) have been removed.

North school wing constructed in 1939; was expanded in 1950 (per cornerstone).

Former church sanctuary converted into gymnasium, c. 1967-68.

17. The Community Center (original church building) is located on the campus of St. Charles Borromeo Catholic Church at the northwest corner of Dewey Ave. and Maiden Lane in the southeast quadrant of the town. The front (east) of this building faces Dewey Ave. Two attached school wings extend from the north and south elevations of this building. A large parking lot is in the front and along the south side of the building. The campus has a number of additional buildings: the former convent (1931; enlarged, 1950) to the north, the rectory (1959) to the east, the new church (1967) to the northeast and the portable school (c. 1980s) to the east).

The development along Dewey Ave. is primarily commercial with many buildings dating from the mid-20th century. Bethany Presbyterian Church is located on the east side of Dewey Avenue, across from St. Charles Borromeo's campus. To the southwest is Britton Road School, located on the south side of Maiden Lane. To the west and north is a residential neighborhood that is a mix of early 1900s and post-World War II frame houses.

18. The former church is a large rectangular building with a

18. continued

gabled roof and stucco (over concrete block) walls. The fenestration is regular. The windows in the north and south elevations are narrow, rectangular steel casement windows set in pairs. The facade includes a triple gable window with arched lintels, decorative round pilasters (between each window) and masonry brackets below the sills. There are smaller 1/1 double-hung windows in the front vestibule addition and tower. A decorative quatrefoil panel is also located in the gable of the east facade.

The large square tower at the southeast corner is also of concrete block construction with stucco veneer. It is topped by a cupola with arched openings and ceramic tile shingles. A cross tops the peak of the cupola.

The one-story front vestibule addition has a shed roof, decorative wood brackets under the eaves and a gabled center entrance with paired, round-arched wood doors. A smaller entrance is located at the southwest corner of the building. It also features decorative wood brackets under the eaves and includes an original metal light fixture with tinted glass over the doorway.

The cornerstone showing "1926" as the date of construction is located on the south elevation, just west of (behind) the tower.

The original church sanctuary (interior) was converted into a gymnasium in c. 1967-68. The pews, altar and other furnishings were removed to create a recreation/community center. Prior to the 1967 changes, the sanctuary had several previous renovations. It was renovated in 1938 following a serious fire that destroyed the adjacent school; it was subsequently remodeled between 1950 and 1956, when the altar and seating were reversed.

Two one-story, masonry school wings extend from the north and south elevations of the former church.

20. Built in 1926, the original St. Charles Borromeo Catholic Church (now Community Center) is architecturally significant as a major example of early-20th century Spanish Eclectic religious architecture in the town of Greece. Although the building has undergone some changes, its basic form and historic details are still intact. Historically, it

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is significant for its association with the development of the Catholic church and early 20th-century suburban growth in this southeast part of the town.

Buildings of Spanish precedent built before about 1920 are generally free adaptations in the Mission style. It was not until the Panama-California Exposition, held in San Diego in 1915, that the precise imitation of more elaborate Spanish prototypes received wide attention. Inspired by the wide publicity given the exposition, other fashionable architects soon began to look directly to Spain for source material. Although they referred to this style as "Spanish Colonial," it is now referred to as Spanish Eclectic because of its broad roots. The style reached its apex during the 1920s and early 1930s and passed rapidly from favor during the 1940s.

Spanish Eclectic is most common in the southwestern states, particularly California, Arizona, Texas and in Florida, all regions where original Spanish Colonial building occurred and continued into the 19th century. Scattered examples are found in suburban developments throughout the country. St. Charles Borromeo Church was "remodeled" in this style in a rapidly-growing suburban neighborhood, c. 1940s.

Some of the many details that are characteristic of the Spanish Eclectic style are shown on this church: the stucco exterior of the building, the square tower with open cupola and tile roof, the triple gable window with arched lintels and round pilaster, the wood brackets under the eaves, and the entrance doors with heavy wood panels. The present color-cream walls with red tile/decorative trim - is also characteristic of the Spanish Eclectic style. Note also the decorative exterior lighting fixtures with dark metal framing and tinted glass located over several of the entrances.

In the early part of the 20th century it became increasingly evident that a large residential section was going to spring up in the area surrounding Kodak Park, particularly north and west. To provide for the Catholics among this increased population, on August 5, 1925, the new parish of St. Charles Borromeo was established by Bishop Thomas F. Hickey. The Rev. John M. Sellinger was appointed to be the first pastor.

Boundaries of the parish were west of the Genesee to Mt. Read Blvd, between Winchester St. and Britton Rd. This was to relieve the strain on the surrounding parishes: Sacred Heart

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on the South, St. John's on the west, Mother of Sorrows and Holy Cross on the north.

Because of the lack of buildings, the first recorded events of St. Charles took place in Sacred Heart parish. Father Sellinger lived at their rectory while inspecting various sites for the new church property.

After some deliberation, the choice finally fell upon the John Sheehan farm property at Dewey Ave. and Maiden Lane. Negotiations were made and the purchase was sealed on December 1, 1925 when \$800 was given to W.N. Britton.

The property had much to recommend it. It was practically in the exact geographical center of the parish. It bordered two prominent thoroughfares making it fairly easy access, and was, in addition, close to Stone Rd., one of the early, well-populated roads of Greece. Because it had been used as orchard land, there were few obstacles to be removed and construction could begin almost immediately. The five-and-one-half acres of property provided ample room for future expansion of the building program. It was well worth it for the total price of the property, \$ 21,000.

During the balance of 1925 parties were held in parishioners' homes in a successful effort to increase the funds of the parish. Plans proceeded for the first parish building, a combination church and school. Frank Quinlan was chosen as architect. Iuppa and Maggio were awarded the contract for construction.

Rochester architect Frank Quinlan was born in 1893. He received his education at Notre Dame University and worked for North East Electric Company and Symington Company. He eventually opened his own office and his designs include the convent of St. John's Church in Greece, Nazareth College, St. Joseph's Villa, St. Augustine's Convent and the Irondequoit Town Hall.

July 4, 1926 marked the laying of the cornerstone of the first church and school. Bishop Thomas Hickey officiated. It was at his suggestion that this new parish be named "St. Charles Borromeo." The bishop had visited Milan in 1924 and was very impressed with the two great saints who labored there. He was determined that, when establishing new parishes in Rochester, he would name two of them for these saints: St.

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Ambrose, Bishop of Milan in the 4th century and St. Charles Borromeo, Bishop of Milan in the 16th century.

The collection taken up at the laying of the cornerstone amounted to the generous sum of \$1264.25. Moving pictures were taken of the historical event (these movies were still intact in 1951).

Work on the buildings proceeded rapidly. The school was ready for its first students in the fall of 1926. The faculty was from the Sisters of Mercy. At its completion, the construction of the parish amounted to \$59,696.46.

After the school and church were open, attention was turned to the rectory. The small farm house facing Dewey Avenue was remodeled into a building with living quarters and offices. In 1927-28 the renovation of the new rectory was completed at a cost of \$10,000.

It was not long until the parish suffered new growing pains in this rapidly developing neighborhood. Early in 1928 it became evident that the new school was already too small. An addition was built on at a cost of over \$15,000. This provided the necessary room, but left the parish in a precarious position for the financial crash of 1929 with a \$93,000 debt and an annual revenue of \$16,000.

In the early 1930s, it was decided to construct a convent for the Sisters of Mercy. They had been commuting daily from their Motherhouse at St. John's Park and it was difficult to continue this on a long term basis. In 1931, plans for the new convent were approved and a site selected.

In that same year, a portable school was acquired to provide additional classroom space for the growing school population at St. Charles.

In the late 1930s, the parish seemed to be recovering from the depression and growing again. In March, 1938 part of the property was sold to Monroe County for the expansion of Dewey Ave. into a boulevard. Unfortunately, a disastrous fire occurred in April, 1938 that destroyed the school and damaged the adjacent church. The damage totaled \$22,000. When the renovation and rebuilding were completed, the total expense amounted to nearly \$25,000. Donations were sought from residents in the area, as well as parishioners and \$6,000 was

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realized during this campaign. At the beginning of the new year of 1939 the parish had a newly-decorated church and newly-constructed school.

The war years 1941-46 found the parish in good enough shape to weather the storm spiritually and financially. Because of the parish's proximity to nearby defense plants, priorities were given for house construction on a wide scale. Thus, the increase of new families again began to tax the facilities of the parish.

Also during the early 1940s, the development of the old George Clark farm across the street into the new St. Joseph's Villa bought the residents of the former St. Mary's and St. Joseph's orphan asylums to the St. Charles parish. Five new "cottage-type" residences were erected for the children. Because plans did not include a chapel on the new campus, the hundred children who lived at St. Joseph's were welcomed at St. Charles Borromeo for Mass and other religious functions.

In 1947, the parish set out to plan for enlarged facilities. A fund drive raised \$53,000, but with the post-war growth in the town and the parallel increased birth rate, there was no alternative but to use this reserve fund for the building of a new school. Plans for a new church were temporarily put aside.

Plans for the new school addition were drawn up by architects, Edward M. Lorscheider and Donald M. Walzer and ground was broken for the new school on December 9, 1949, paving the way for the construction work done by A. Friedrich & Son. In less than a year, the cornerstone of the new addition was laid on September 10, 1950 and the school opened with a registration of 704 pupils.

Included in the new addition were six classrooms, two large kindergartens, a principal's office and nurse's clinic. Underneath the addition a large parish hall with stage, kitchen and meeting room was provided.

To keep pace with the increasing classroom needs, the faculty of Sisters was also increased. This led to the need for an enlarged convent. Work began in April, 1950 and, after several delays, the convent expansion was completed.

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St. Charles Borromeo parishioners saw the completion and occupancy of the present rectory in July, 1959. It replaced the former rectory and contains living quarters, rooms for consultations, offices and other parish committee meeting space.

The dream of having a larger church finally became a reality. The old portable building, no longer needed for classrooms, was torn down and the new church erected in its place. The cornerstone was laid in 1966 and the building completed for use by the Spring of 1967.

Space which had formerly been used as the church sanctuary in the 1926 building was remodeled for school use. This area provided space for a library, principal's office, secretary's office and large gym with a regulation-size basketball court. This gym has since served the needs of not only the school physical education program, but also the parish, C.Y.O. and community activities.

It is not possible to determine when the Community Center developed its present appearance. A 1938 photo of the church and school (south wing) shows the gable-roofed church building without a tower. The rather plain exterior has three arched windows on the east (front) elevation, a round rose window in the gable and a small parapet tower with arched opening (a small bell hangs inside). There is no doorway on the facade. The two entrances to the original church are located on the south elevation, which also has three large square windows with 12-panes each.

In the 1951 anniversary booklet, there is a 2-page aerial photo of the church campus. The caption states, "Aerial view of St. Charles Borromeo - 1951." Still, there is no tower on the church. It appears exactly as it did in the 1938 photo, except for four tall, columnar, juniper evergreen shrubs at southeast and northeast corners of the building.

In speaking to a parish staff members and the current school principal, it was not possible to determine when the tower and vestibule addition were constructed. One parish staff member attended elementary school here beginning c. 1946 and the principal came as a student teacher in 1954. Neither of them remember seeing the church without its tower. They both stated that the tower was in existence when they first started here at St. Charles Borromeo school between 1946 and

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1954. Neither, did they recall any large construction projects for the addition of the tower and vestibule.

It, therefore, appears that the tower and vestibule may have been added in the early 1940s, when the church's finances were better (after the depression) and the Spanish Eclectic style was nearing the end of its popularity. No additional church records or oral history have turned up to reveal when the tower, vestibule entrance, and arched gable windows were added.

Surrounded today by commercial and residential development, the original St. Charles Borromeo Church and its adjacent campus are a visual reminder of the early and mid 20th-century development of this neighborhood.

21. See final report for bibliography;

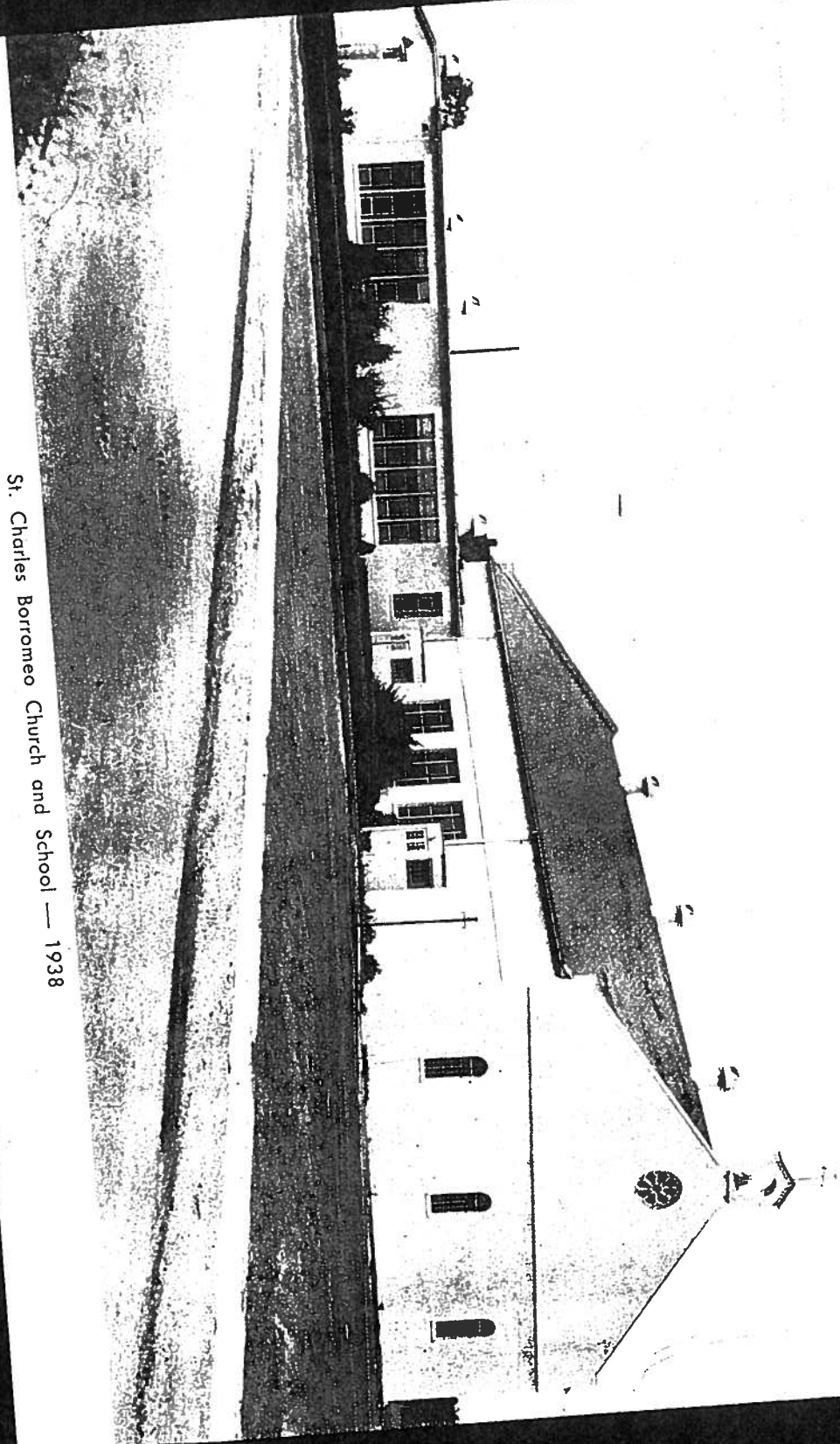
"St. Charles Borromeo Church Silver Jubilee, 1926-1951;"

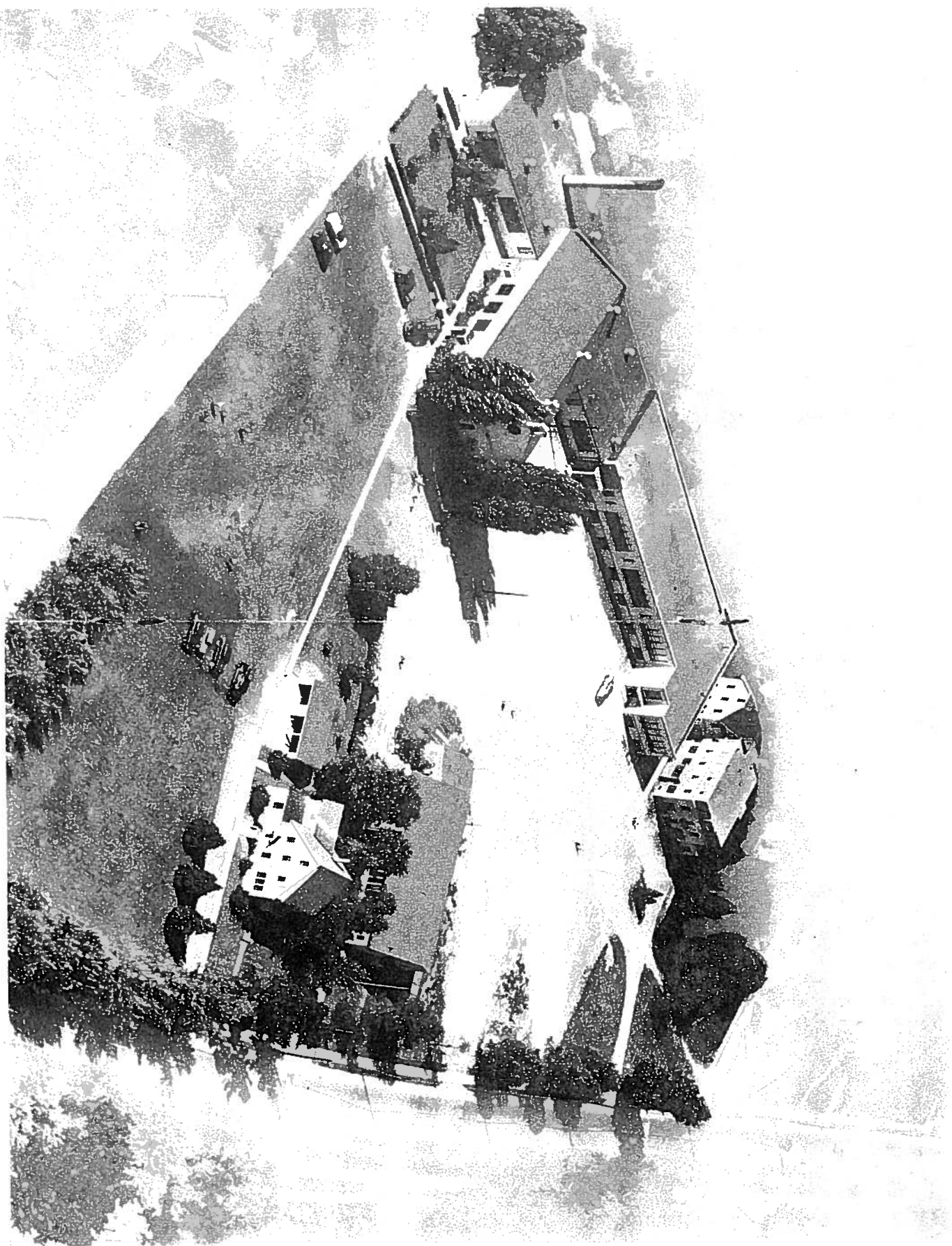
church files; interviews with school principal and parish office staff, 12/94.

St. Charles Borromeo Church, Dewey Ave.
-view of original sanctuary (now community center/gym)



St. Charles Borromeo Church and School — 1938





Aerial view of St. Charles Borromeo — 1951 ?



